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CHANGES IN NEBRASKA'S EMPLOYMENT, 1967-1984

Employment in Nebraska has increased steadily and virtually without interruption since 1967. Total employment, which was 623,000 in 1967, has grown to 788,000 in 1984.

This article reviews employment changes in Nebraska over the interval 1967-1984. These dates were selected because they represent the longest interval for which reliable data are available.

Employment changes by sector (i.e., manufacturing, trade, et cetera) will be analyzed and compared with national trends. Data for Nebraska were compiled from reports issued by the Nebraska Department of Labor, while data for the United States were compiled by the United States Department of Labor, Bureau of Labor Statistics. Recent Nebraska data are more reliable than data of 10 to 15 years past. Comparability is maintained by benchmarking employment data when an economic census is taken. These economic censuses are conducted every five years in years ending in 2 and 7. The most recent economic census was conducted in 1982. Benchmarking is necessary to classify new industries, but perfect comparability is not always possible. Strict comparability with national data is not possible because Nebraska data contain a miscellaneous category.

OVERVIEW

Total employment has increased each year with the exceptions of the 1974-1975 recession and the 1980-1982 recession. Total employment was up 26.0 percent over the 17 year interval; nonagricultural employment rose 40.0 percent. Nebraska employment gains in percentage terms were nearly equal to national increases over the same interval. Data in Table 1 summarize Nebraska and national employment levels by year 1967-1984.

The shift in employment composition toward service employment is visible over the period 1967-1984. Employment in the service sector of Nebraska's economy was estimated at 135,000 in 1984, up nearly 83.0 percent from 1967's 74,000. No other component of the Nebraska economy shows such a dramatic increase. Service employment has gained yearly during the period 1967-1984, with the exception of 1976 when there was no growth in service employment.

Services, as noted above, led all industries with an 82.9 percent increase. Major service industries include hotels and lodging places, personal services, business services, automobile repair services, other repair services, health services, amusement and recreation services, legal services, and selected educational services.

The finance, insurance, and real estate (FIRE) industry ranked second in employment gains with a jump of nearly 65.0 percent. The trade sector, wholesale and retail, followed. The government sector ranked fourth, followed by transportation, communication, and utilities.

Before reaching any conclusions regarding the Nebraska government sector, it is important to remember that electric utility employees are government employees in the state, since the electricity industry in Nebraska is publicly owned. Nebraska's government employment increase was nearly 43.0 percent over the interval, compared with 40.0 percent nationally. Government employment, excluding utility workers, is probably below average in the state of Nebraska.

Manufacturing employment swelled 11.0 percent over the period 1967-1984. Nebraska did better than the nation in terms of employment change over the 17 year interval. Construction employment was about the same in 1984 as it was in 1967, up a scant 1.6 percent. This contrasts markedly with the national gain of more than one-third in construction employment.

Finally, mining employment in Nebraska declined 2.9 percent over the interval 1967-1984. Mining employment is small in the state. Nationwide, mining employment rose a substantial 58.0 percent over the period 1967-1984.

Miscellaneous employment in Nebraska includes employees that cannot be classified or do not fit conveniently any of the above classes. This category increased 30.1 percent over the study interval. Keep in mind that employees in this category are from all sectors--their absence distorts Nebraska data and makes strict comparisons with national data impossible.

DISTRIBUTION OF EMPLOYMENT

Nebraska has proportionally more employees in agriculture, finance, insurance, and real estate, and transporation, communication, and utilities than are found nationwide. Caution is advised in interpreting these statistics because of the large group of employees in the miscellaneous category in Nebraska not present in the national data.

The larger number of employees in agriculture is easy to understand since Nebraska is a major commodity-producing state. Finance, insurance, and real estate employees constitute 7.0 percent of total employment in Nebraska compared with 5.8 percent nationwide. This likely reflects the fact that the insurance indus-

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TABLE 1
Nebraska Employment By Sector
1967-1984
(in thousands)

Year	Agriculture	Miscellaneous	Mining	Construction	Manufacturing	TCU	Trade	FIRE	Services	Government	Total	Total Non Ag
1967	114	64	2	24	80	36	110	26	74	92	623	509
1968	110	63	2	24	83	37	114	27	76	94	629	519
1969	108	63	2	25	87	37	117	28	79	97	643	535
1970	90	69	2	25	85	37	121	29	83	101	641	551
1971	91	70	2	24	83	37	122	30	86	105	650	559
1972	89	71	2	28	86	38	131	30	92	109	675	586
1973	89	71	2	29	90	39	139	32	93	117	701	612
1974	88	72	2	30	93	40	144	34	99	121	723	635
1975	83	72	2	28	85	39	145	34	100	125	713	630
1976	82	72	2	30	88	41	151	36	100	125	726	644
1977	80	78	2	32	91	42	156	38	104	129	751	671
1978	74	80	2	33	94	44	159	39	109	130	765	691
1979	73	79	2	32	99	48	164	41	114	131	783	710
1980	72	76	2	29	96	48	164	42	116	131	776	704
1981	73	76	2	26	95	47	162	41	120	130	773	700
1982	75	81	2	24	88	45	159	41	123	129	766	691
1983	76	83	2	23	85	43	158	42	128	130	770	694
1984	76	84	2	24	89	43	161	43	135	132	788	712
% Change 1967 to 1984	-33.15	30.11	-2.90	1.59	11.05	19.44	45.94	64.79	82.88	42.93	26.56	39.97
					Percentage Distribution							
1967	18.3	10.3	0.3	3.8	12.9	5.8	17.7	4.2	11.9	14.8	100.0	81.7
1968	17.5	10.0	0.3	3.8	13.2	5.9	18.1	4.3	12.1	14.9	100.0	82.5
1969	16.8	9.8	0.3	3.9	13.5	5.8	18.2	4.3	12.3	15.1	100.0	83.2
1970	14.0	10.7	0.2	3.8	13.3	5.8	18.9	4.5	12.9	15.8	100.0	86.0
1971	14.0	10.8	0.3	3.7	12.8	5.7	18.8	4.6	13.2	16.2	100.0	86.0
1972	13.1	10.6	0.2	4.1	12.8	5.6	19.4	4.5	13.6	16.1	100.0	86.9
1973	12.7	10.1	0.2	4.2	12.9	5.6	19.8	4.6	13.3	16.7	100.0	87.3
1974	12.2	10.0	0.2	4.1	12.9	5.5	19.9	4.6	13.6	16.8	100.0	87.8
1975	11.7	10.1	0.2	3.9	12.0	5.5	20.3	4.8	14.0	17.5	100.0	88.3
1976	11.3	9.9	0.2	4.2	12.1	5.6	20.8	4.9	13.8	17.2	100.0	88.7
1977	10.6	10.3	0.2	4.3	12.1	5.6	20.8	5.2	13.9	17.2	100.0	89.4
1978	9.7	10.5	0.2	4.3	12.3	5.8	20.8	5.2	14.2	17.0	100.0	90.3
1979	9.3	10.1	0.2	4.1	12.7	6.1	21.0	5.2	14.6	16.7	100.0	90.7
1980	9.3	9.8	0.2	3.7	12.4	6.2	21.1	5.4	15.0	16.9	100.0	90.7
1981	9.5	9.9	0.2	3.4	12.3	6.1	20.9	5.3	15.5	16.8	100.0	90.5
1982	9.8	10.6	0.3	3.1	11.5	5.9	20.7	5.4	16.0	16.9	100.0	90.2
1983	9.8	10.8	0.2	3.0	11.0	5.6	20.5	5.4	16.6	16.9	100.0	90.2
1984	9.7	10.6	0.2	3.0	11.3	5.5	20.4	5.5	17.2	16.7	100.0	90.3

Source: compilation of reports from the Nebraska Department of Labor.

TCU = transportation, communication, utilities
FIRE = finance, insurance, and real estate

TABLE 1 (continued)
United States Employment By Sector
1967-1984
(in thousands)

Year	Agriculture	Mining	Construction	Manufacturing	TCU	Trade	FIRE	Services	Government	Total Non Ag	Total
1967	3,844	613	3,248	19,447	4,268	13,606	3,185	10,045	11,391	65,803	69,647
1968	3,817	606	3,350	19,781	4,318	14,099	3,337	10,567	11,839	67,897	71,714
1969	3,606	619	3,575	20,167	4,442	14,705	3,512	11,169	12,195	70,384	73,990
1970	3,463	623	3,588	19,367	4,515	15,040	3,645	11,548	12,554	70,880	74,343
1971	3,394	609	3,704	18,623	4,476	15,352	3,772	11,797	12,881	71,214	74,608
1972	3,484	628	3,889	19,151	4,541	15,949	3,908	12,276	13,334	73,675	77,159
1973	3,470	642	4,097	20,154	4,656	16,606	4,046	12,857	13,732	76,790	80,260
1974	3,515	697	4,020	20,077	4,725	16,987	4,148	13,441	14,170	78,265	81,780
1975	3,408	752	3,525	18,323	4,542	17,060	4,165	13,892	14,686	76,945	80,353
1976	3,331	779	3,576	18,997	4,582	17,755	4,271	14,551	14,871	79,382	82,713
1977	3,283	813	3,851	19,682	4,713	18,516	4,467	15,303	15,127	82,471	85,754
1978	3,387	851	4,229	20,505	4,923	19,542	4,724	16,252	15,672	86,697	90,084
1979	3,347	958	4,463	21,040	5,136	20,193	4,975	17,112	15,947	89,823	93,170
1980	3,364	1,027	4,346	20,285	5,146	20,310	5,160	17,890	16,241	90,406	93,770
1981	3,368	1,139	4,188	20,170	5,165	20,547	5,298	18,619	16,031	91,156	94,524
1982	3,401	1,143	3,911	18,853	5,081	20,402	5,340	19,064	15,803	89,596	92,997
1983	3,383	952	3,948	18,434	4,954	20,881	5,465	19,694	15,869	90,196	93,579
1984	3,321	974	4,345	19,412	5,171	22,134	5,682	20,761	15,984	94,461	97,782
% Change 1967 to 1984	-13.61	58.89	33.77	-0.18	21.16	62.68	78.40	106.68	40.32	43.55	29.95
					Percentage Distribution						
1967	5.5	0.9	4.7	27.9	6.1	19.5	4.6	14.4	16.4	94.5	100.0
1968	5.3	0.8	4.7	27.6	6.0	19.7	4.7	14.7	16.5	94.7	100.0
1969	4.9	0.8	4.8	27.3	6.0	19.9	4.7	15.1	16.5	95.1	100.0
1970	4.7	0.8	4.8	26.1	6.1	20.2	4.9	15.5	16.9	95.3	100.0
1971	4.5	0.8	5.0	25.0	6.0	20.6	5.1	15.8	17.3	95.5	100.0
1972	4.5	0.8	5.0	24.8	5.9	20.7	5.1	15.9	17.3	95.5	100.0
1973	4.3	0.8	5.1	25.1	5.8	20.7	5.0	16.0	17.1	95.7	100.0
1974	4.3	0.9	4.9	24.6	5.8	20.8	5.1	16.4	17.3	95.7	100.0
1975	4.2	0.9	4.4	22.8	5.7	21.2	5.2	17.3	18.3	95.8	100.0
1976	4.0	0.9	4.3	23.0	5.5	21.5	5.2	17.6	18.0	96.0	100.0
1977	3.8	0.9	4.5	23.0	5.5	21.6	5.2	17.8	17.6	96.2	100.0
1978	3.8	0.9	4.7	22.8	5.5	21.7	5.2	18.0	17.4	96.2	100.0
1979	3.6	1.0	4.8	22.6	5.5	21.7	5.3	18.4	17.1	96.4	100.0
1980	3.6	1.1	4.6	21.6	5.5	21.7	5.5	19.1	17.3	96.4	100.0
1981	3.6	1.2	4.4	21.3	5.5	21.7	5.6	19.7	17.0	96.4	100.0
1982	3.7	1.2	4.2	20.3	5.5	21.9	5.7	20.5	17.0	96.3	100.0
1983	3.6	1.0	4.2	19.7	5.3	22.3	5.8	21.0	17.0	96.4	100.0
1984	3.4	1.0	4.4	19.9	5.3	22.6	5.8	21.1	16.3	96.6	100.0

Source: U.S. Department of Labor, *Employment and Earnings* and U.S. Department of Commerce, *Business Statistics*, 1982

TCU = transportation, communication, utilities
FIRE = finance, insurance, and real estate

Review and Outlook

Improved performances by the distributive and manufacturing components of Nebraska's economy were largely responsible for the August 1985 increase in nonagriculture output. The physical volume indicator of the Bureau of Business Research indicates a July-to-August increase of 0.6 percent in nonagriculture activity, the second consecutive monthly increase in the nonfarm component of the Bureau's index.

After registering a sharp decline in July 1985 output, manufacturing activity increased 1.4 percent in August. The distributive component continued to improve, with a 0.7 gain in output. Weak economic performance in the construction sector in July was repeated in August, with a 3.9 percent drop in monthly output. Nebraska's August decline in building activity contrasts with a 1.4 percent increase in construction output nationwide. State government activity, up sharply during July, fell 0.2 percent during August. With the exception of construction, July-to-August percentage changes in state nonfarm output paralleled those of the nation.

August 1985 index of prices received by Nebraska farmers for all agriculture products declined 4.5 percent. Since August 1984, the Nebraska index of farm prices has contracted 17.2 percent. Nationally, the situation is only slightly better, with the August index of agriculture prices received decreasing 4.3 percent. Compared to the August 1984 index number, U.S. farm prices have

(continued on page 5)

Notes for Tables 1 and 2: (1) The "distributive" indicator represents a composite of wholesale and retail trade; transportation, communication and utilities; finance, insurance, and real estate; and selected services. (2) The "physical volume" indicator and its components represent the dollar volume indicator and its components adjusted for price changes using appropriate price indexes–see Table 5, page 5.

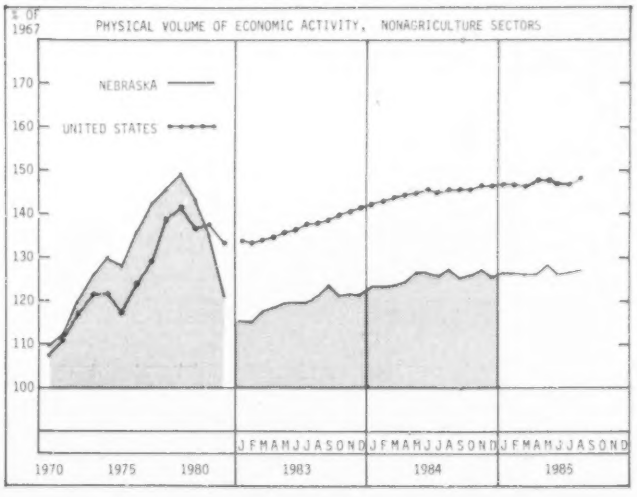
ECONOMIC INDICATORS: NEBRASKA AND UNITED STATES

1. CHANGE FROM PREVIOUS YEAR

August 1985	Current Month as Percent of Same Month Previous Year		1985 to date as percent of 1984 to date	
Indicator	Nebraska	U.S.	Nebraska	U.S.
Dollar Volume	na	na	na	na
Agricultural	na	na	na	na
Nonagricultural	103.3	105.7	105.0	105.8
Construction	91.4	108.2	94.7	108.4
Manufacturing	95.7	98.6	100.2	100.6
Distributive	105.0	107.9	105.4	107.3
Government	110.8	106.7	113.4	106.8
Physical Volume	na	na	na	na
Agricultural	na	na	na	na
Nonagricultural	100.1	102.6	101.5	102.5
Construction	89.1	105.4	91.5	104.8
Manufacturing	96.5	98.5	100.5	100.2
Distributive	101.5	104.4	101.7	103.5
Government	103.1	102.1	104.7	101.7

2. CHANGE FROM 1967

	Percent of 1967 Average	
Indicator	Nebraska	U.S.
Dollar Volume	na	na
Agricultural	na	na
Nonagricultural	381.9	453.1
Construction	280.2	458.0
Manufacturing	366.0	323.0
Distributive	390.5	523.1
Government	426.7	461.2
Physical Volume	na	na
Agricultural	na	na
Nonagricultural	127.3	148.6
Construction	78.5	128.3
Manufacturing	148.5	127.0
Distributive	120.7	161.7
Government	152.4	152.0

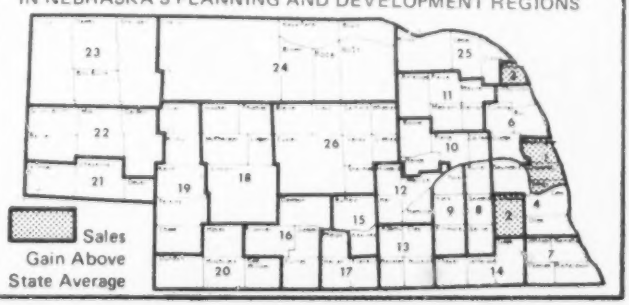


3. NET TAXABLE RETAIL SALES OF NEBRASKA REGIONS AND CITIES

Region Number[1] and City	City Sales[2]	Sales in Region[2]	
	August 1985 as percent of August 1984	August 1985 as percent of August 1984	1985 to date as percent of 1984 to date
The State	97.4	96.4	99.5
1 Omaha	100.4	100.1	105.3
Bellevue	112.7		
Blair	112.9		
2 Lincoln	103.3	102.0	103.5
3 So. Sioux City	102.7	101.4	100.2
4 Nebraska City	103.2	102.0	95.2
6 Fremont	98.4	91.3	95.3
West Point	92.8		
7 Falls City	93.0	97.1	94.7
8 Seward	97.7	98.9	92.7
9 York	102.0	91.7	93.4
10 Columbus	103.4	95.3	92.5
11 Norfolk	93.2	87.3	94.3
Wayne	93.7		
12 Grand Island	94.4	91.8	95.3
13 Hastings	92.1	86.3	93.2
14 Beatrice	109.8	98.5	94.0
Fairbury	95.5		
15 Kearney	100.0	88.6	92.8
16 Lexington	97.6	89.3	91.1
17 Holdrege	86.3	86.3	88.6
18 North Platte	87.4	87.7	91.8
19 Ogallala	98.5	92.4	91.0
20 McCook	104.2	98.4	95.1
21 Sidney	97.7	96.4	98.2
Kimball	96.1		
22 Scottsbluff/Gering	102.2	98.4	97.9
23 Alliance	99.6	96.2	98.0
Chadron	103.4		
24 O'Neill	78.2	90.7	91.5
25 Hartington	84.8	85.2	90.5
26 Broken Bow	90.0	91.8	91.8

[1]See region map below.
[2]Sales on which sales taxes are collected by retailers located in the state. Region totals include motor vehicle sales; city totals exclude motor vehicle sales.
Compiled from data provided by Nebraska Department of Revenue.

1985 YEAR TO DATE AS PERCENT OF 1984 YEAR TO DATE IN NEBRASKA'S PLANNING AND DEVELOPMENT REGIONS



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dipped 15.6 percent. Cash receipts for state and U.S. agriculture commodities are unavailable.

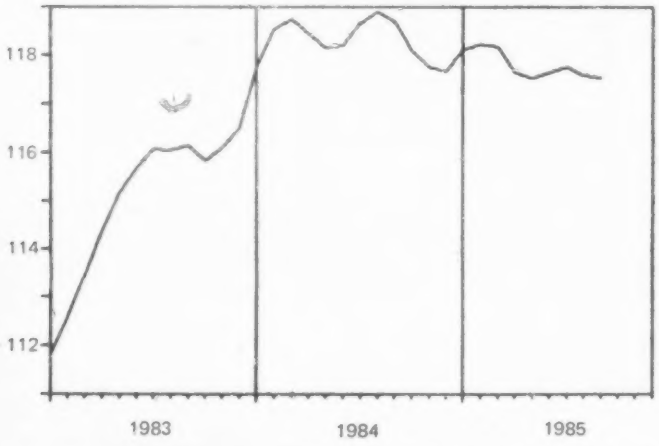
On a yearly basis (August 1984-to-August 1985), state retail sales continued a downward slide. Nebraska total dollar volume sales fell 3.6 percent in August, 5.1 percent when price changes are taken into account. Since August 1984, Nebraska motor vehicle sales have decline 10.3 percent, 10.2 price adjusted. Compared to the August 1984 sales level, Nebraska dollar volume nonvehicle sales slipped 2.8 percent. Nationally, dollar volume retail sales increased 1.9 percent from July to August 1985 and were up more than 8 percent compared to August 1984 sales.

Eight of the twenty-six cities listed by the Bureau of Business Research registered positive changes in business activity from August 1984 to August 1985. Although construction activity has tapered in Chadron, this city continues to lead with a 10.2 percent gain. Strong August increases in building activity and retail sales elevated Blair (+5.8 percent) and Beatrice (+4.6 percent) toward the top of the list of Nebraska cities with positive changes in business activity. Scottsbluff/Gering business activity increased 5.1 percent due to a significant upswing in construction activity, while a 12.7 percent growth in retail sales contributed to Bellevue's increase in August business activity.

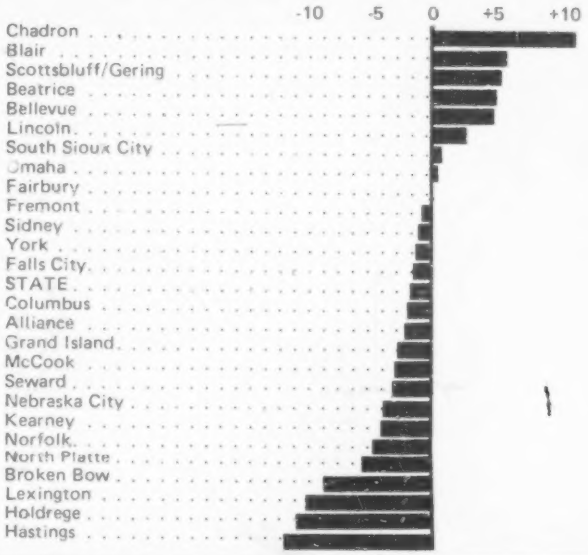
August's 0.3 percent decline in the Nebraska index of leading economic indicators has been revised upward to a 0.2 percent decline. The September leading index remained unchanged from the August level. The state's leading index has remained virtually flat during the last six months (April-September).

CHARLES L. BARE

Nebraska's Composite Index of Leading Economic Indicators
1977=100



CITY BUSINESS INDEX
Percent Change August 1984 to August 1985



5. PRICE INDEXES

August 1985	Index (1967 = 100)	Percent of Same Month Last Year	Year to Date as Percent of Same Period Last Year*
Consumer Prices	323.5	103.4	103.6
Commodity component	286.5	101.8	102.2
Wholesale Prices	307.2	98.8	99.5
Agricultural Prices			
United States	221.0	84.4	89.8
Nebraska	207.0	82.8	89.4

*Using arithmetic average of monthly indexes.
Sources: Consumer and Wholesale Prices: U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics; Agricultural Prices: U.S. Department of Agriculture.

4. August 1985 CITY BUSINESS INDICATORS

The State and Its Trading Centers	Percent of Same Month a Year Ago: Employment[1]	Building Activity[2]	Power Consumption[3]
The State	99.7	104.5	90.7
Alliance	98.8	81.6	99.6
Beatrice	99.4	132.7	83.3
Bellevue	100.1	86.6	90.0
Blair	100.1	122.6	101.3*
Broken Bow	100.3	43.6	88.0
Chadron	95.7	1,075.9	96.3
Columbus	95.8	81.1	85.4
Fairbury	99.5	185.7	105.1
Falls City	100.2	167.4	83.5
Fremont	100.4	114.1	82.1*
Grand Island	99.2	106.5	85.5
Hastings	99.6	14.6	87.3
Holdrege	100.7	31.2	90.9
Kearney	99.1	46.5	90.4
Lexington	98.4	18.1	99.9
Lincoln	101.4	126.0	96.1
McCook	99.3	41.6	111.1
Nebraska City	99.4	35.2	88.2
Norfolk	99.2	76.7	106.8
North Platte	99.9	90.3	na
Omaha	100.1	125.4	83.0
Scottsbluff/Gering	100.2	272.8	145.0
Seward	100.2	63.5	91.1
Sidney	99.2	129.2	100.6
So. Sioux City	99.7	111.0	110.0
York	99.3	84.0	92.6

[1] As a proxy for city employment, total employment for the county in which a city is located is used.
[2] Building Activity is the value of building permits issued as spread over an appropriate time period of construction. The U.S. Department of Commerce Composite Construction Cost Index is used to adjust construction activity for price changes.
[3] Power Consumption is a combined index of consumption of electricity and natural gas except in cases marked * for which only one is used.

Source: Compilation by Bureau of Business Research from reports of private and public agencies.

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try is larger in Nebraska than it is nationally. The transportation, communication, and utilites (TCU) sector is also above the U.S. average. Railroads are an important component of the state economy.

Services are approximately the same proportion of Nebraska's economy as the nation's economy. Manufacturing is below the national average, as are the mining and construction sectors.

The proportion of employees in the government sector is higher than nationally. This is attributable to the role that public power plays in Nebraska. Removal of electrical utility employees from the government sector would bring Nebraska's government employment in line with national trends.

The service sector is the fastest growing sector in the nation's economy. The same trend is occurring in Nebraska. The service sector of 1984 is more than haircuts, lunches, automobile repair, and related items which are familiar and important to all. Some services are entirely local, but others are exports. When a large insurance company writes a policy on health and medical risk to an out of state firm, it becomes an export. When a software firm sells a program to someone in California or New York, it becomes an export and adds to Nebraska's economic base. These service operations do far more than service basic industry. They would survive in the event that other basic industries failed.

OBSERVATIONS

Nebraska's employment changes follow the 1967-1984 national employment trends closely. Unfortunately, the rate of employment increase in Nebraska was only about 90.0 percent of the nation's employment increase. It is interesting to note that, by and large, Nebraska follows U.S. trends. For instance, services, finance, insurance, and real estate, and trade ranked 1st, 2nd, and 3rd nationally and in Nebraska.

Nebraska employment trends part from national trends in manufacturing, construction, and mining. Mining is easy to understand, because Nebraska has no sizable mining sector.

The limited growth of Nebraska's construction sector indicates the dearth of construction activity following the 1981-1982 recession. Construction employment has increased more or less uninterruptedly in Nebraska through 1978, peaking at 33,000 employees in 1978 and declining to 24,000 workers in 1984. Nationwide, construction employment peaked at 4.3 million in 1979. It declined during the 1981-1982 recession, but now has climbed near the peak level of 1979. Nebraska construction employment is about 9,000 persons below peak levels.

Employment in Nebraska's manufacturing sector ran counter to national trends, registering an 11.0 percent gain, compared to a small decline nationally. Manufacturing employment in Nebraska increased to 99,000 in 1979. It then began a decline which bottomed in 1983 at 85,000. Employment in 1984 in the state's manufacturing sector was higher than it was in 1967. There was virtually no change over that interval in national manufacturing employment. Nebraska's smaller and less diversified manufacturing base is undoubtedly important in explaining the better performance of Nebraska's manufacturing sector.

DONALD E. PURSELL

NEBRASKA POPULATION PROJECTIONS 1985-2020

The Bureau of Business Research periodically prepares population projections for the state. These projections can be used by state and local governmental agencies, business firms, labor unions, and other organizations.

The latest projections were prepared in November 1982 and are based on data from the 1980 census.

Nebraska Population Projections 1985-2020 contains three projection series--high, medium, and low--based on differing assumptions of net migration. The medium series most closely reflects the trends revealed in the 1980 census and 1982 estimates. At the state level, age information is provided for five year age groups and for 75+. The information at the county level is not as detailed and is available for the age groups 0-4, 5-14, 15-24, 25-44, 45-64, and 65+. A special tabulation was made for the 0-17 age group.

Copies of *Nebraska Population Projections 1985-2000* are available for $17.50 from the Bureau of Business Research, 200 CBA, University of Nebraska-Lincoln, Lincoln, NE 68588-0406. Checks should be made to the Bureau of Business Research.

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